

ORIGINAL

ADDRESS

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PRESENTED TO THE CONFERENCE ON
CLINICAL-PATHOLOGICAL CORRELATES OF
HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS (HIV) INFECTION
WASHINGTON, D.C.
FEBRUARY 26, 1988

(GREETINGS TO HOSTS, GUESTS, FRIENDS, ETC.)

IT IS MY GREAT PLEASURE TO WELCOME YOU ALL TO THIS HISTORIC CONFERENCE.

I ALMOST BLUSH AT SAYING THAT, HOWEVER. HERE IT IS, ALMOST 7 YEARS SINCE THE FIRST REPORTS OF WHAT WE NOW CALL "AIDS" WERE PUBLISHED BY THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL. AND, AT THIS LATE DATE, WE ARE FINALLY HOLDING THE FIRST CONFERENCE WHICH WILL EXPLOIT THE COMBINED EXPERTISE OF CLINICIANS AND PATHOLOGISTS.

BUT I'M AFRAID THIS INCLINATION TO BE SEPARATE AND APART STILL PERSISTS IN MEDICINE, DESPITE ALL THE RECENT EVIDENCE THAT THE CONTRARY MODUS OPERANDI IS WHAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE REALLY NEED.

THE COUNTRY NEEDS THE COMBINED, COLLEGIAL EFFORTS OF LIFE SCIENTISTS ACROSS THE BOARD. WE NEED THE RESULTS OF INTELLECTUAL CROSS-STIMULATION. WE NEED MORE SERIOUS AND MORE INTENSIVE INFORMATION SHARING.

WHAT WE DON'T NEED ARE THE OLD SEGREGATED KINGDOMS OF SPECIALIZATION.

AND SO I'M DELIGHTED TO BE HERE TO OPEN THIS MEETING AND TO OFFER MY PERSONAL CONGRATULATIONS TO DR. HAROLD GINZBURG OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ALLERGY AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES AND DR. ABE MACHER OF THE ARMED FORCES INSTITUTE OF PATHOLOGY FOR CONCEIVING THIS IDEA AND FOR BRINGING IT TO FRUITION.

THIS IS NOT, HOWEVER, AN INTELLECTUAL EXERCISE ... OR A BUREAUCRATIC TOUR DE FORCE ... SOMETHING TO NOD OUR HEADS OVER AND THEN DISMISS.

THE PURPOSE BEHIND THIS JOINT CONFERENCE IS -- IF I MAY USE THE PHRASE -- "DEADLY SERIOUS."

WE NOW HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF CLINICAL EXPERIENCE WITH AIDS --
OR, MORE PRECISELY, WITH THE HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS, OR
H.I.V.

WE DON'T KNOW EVERYTHING THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT H.I.V. BY A
VERY LONG SHOT. NEVERTHELESS, THE WORLD LITERATURE IS ALREADY
BURSTING WITH CLINICAL DATA REGARDING AIDS AND AIDS-RELATED
CONDITIONS.

SIMILARLY, WE ARE AMASSING A TRULY IMPRESSIVE ARCHIVE OF
PATHOLOGICAL DATA INDICATING THE EXTENT TO WHICH THIS VIRUS
INVADES AND DESTROYS THE HUMAN MIND AND BODY.

IT SHOULD BE CLEAR TO EVERYONE BY NOW THAT BOTH ARCHIVES OF INFORMATION ARE ESSENTIAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF MORE EFFECTIVE THERAPIES AND OVERALL REGIMENS OF PATIENT CARE.

AND THE NEED IS URGENT. THE TOTAL COUNT SINCE 1981 OF PERSONS REPORTED TO HAVE AIDS HAS NOW PASSED 54,000. OF THAT NUMBER, MORE THAN 30,000 HAVE DIED -- THAT'S A RATE OF 56 PERCENT.

56 PERCENT IS BAD ENOUGH ... BUT IT'S NOT THE REAL FIGURE. FOR EXAMPLE, OF THOSE WHO HAD THE DISEASE IN 1981, OVER 93 PERCENT HAVE DIED. AND 93 PERCENT AT THE VERY LEAST IS, TO MY WAY OF THINKING, THE TRUE MORTALITY RATE FOR THE DISEASE OF AIDS.

WE ARE WORKING VERY HARD AT PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO ALERT PEOPLE TO THE DANGERS OF THIS DISEASE -- ESPECIALLY PEOPLE WHO PRACTICE CERTAIN HIGH-RISK BEHAVIORS ... NEEDLE-SHARING AND RECEPTIVE ANAL INTERCOURSE IN PARTICULAR.

BUT EVEN IF EVERYONE WE REACH WITH OUR MESSAGE SHOULD IMMEDIATELY AND IRREVOCABLY ABANDON SUCH HIGH-RISK BEHAVIORS, WE KNOW THAT WOULD NOT ERASE THE DISEASE FROM OUR SOCIETY. UNFORTUNATELY, A GREAT MANY PEOPLE -- AS MANY AS A MILLION-AND-A-HALF BY SOME ESTIMATES -- ARE INFECTED WITH THE AIDS VIRUS BUT JUST AREN'T SHOWING ANY SYMPTOMS AS YET.

BUT AT LEAST 60 PERCENT OF THEM WILL -- AGAIN, SOME ESTIMATES PUT THAT FIGURE CLOSER TO 90 PERCENT -- AND, THEREFORE, WE STILL DESPERATELY NEED THE KIND OF INTELLIGENCE, JUDGMENT, AND SCIENTIFIC ACUMEN THAT IS PRESENT AT THIS UNIQUE CONFERENCE.

I COULD GO ON IN THIS VEIN FOR THE REST OF THE MORNING, BECAUSE I FEEL SO STRONGLY ABOUT THE NEED TO FIGHT THIS DISEASE WITH EVERYTHING WE'VE GOT. BUT I PROMISED DRS. GINZBURG AND MACHER THAT I WOULD NOT STEAL TOO MUCH VALUABLE TIME FROM THEIR AGENDA.

SO I WILL CLOSE NOW WITH A SHORT LINE FROM GOETHE -- I'M SURE YOU'VE HEARD IT BEFORE ... IT'S VERY POPULAR WITH AFTER-DINNER SPEAKERS. BUT IT SEEMED TO BE ESPECIALLY APPROPRIATE FOR THIS GATHERING.

THE LINE GOES LIKE THIS:

"OUR FRIENDS SHOW US WHAT WE CAN DO, OUR ENEMIES TEACH US WHAT WE MUST DO."

TODAY, CLINICIANS AND PATHOLOGISTS HAVE COME TOGETHER AS FRIENDS AND AS ALLIES AND, IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS PRECEDENT-SETTING CONFERENCE, YOU WILL SHOW EACH OTHER WHAT YOU CAN DO IN THE FIGHT AGAINST AIDS.

BUT AIDS IS THE ENEMY ... A PARTICULARLY BRUTAL ENEMY ...
AND AIDS TEACHES US WHAT WE MUST DO -- TOGETHER -- IF WE HOPE TO
SAVE THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS OF HUMAN LIVES IN THE MONTHS AND
YEARS TO COME.

THANK YOU ... AND BEST WISHES FOR A MOST SUCCESSFUL MEETING.

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